

NEWS RELEASE

**OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS**

**RONALD J. TENPAS
UNITED STATES ATTORNEY**

Nine Executive Drive, Fairview Heights, Illinois 62208, Telephone (618) 628-3700

For Immediate Release

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Ronald J. Tenpas, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Illinois, announced that **DONALD E. MASON**, age 31, of Alton, Illinois, was sentenced today in Federal District Court for convictions on three drug felony counts including conspiracy to distribute cocaine and cocaine base ("crack" cocaine), possession with intent to distribute cocaine and cocaine base ("crack" cocaine), and a violation of federal firearms laws. **MASON** was sentenced to a term of 20 years' imprisonment without parole, a \$1,000 fine, a \$400 special assessment, and upon completion of his imprisonment, a 10-year period of supervised release. **MASON** had entered guilty pleas to the described felony offenses on September 2, 2004.

DONALDE. MASON was arrested in Alton, Illinois, on April 20, 2004, and has remained in federal custody since his arrest. On February 12, 2004, a federal search warrant was executed at **MASON**'s residence in the 200 Block of West 19th Street, Alton, Illinois. Cocaine, "crack" cocaine, and U.S. Currency, constituting proceeds from the operation of the drug conspiracy and two firearms, were seized during the execution of the federal search warrant.

The investigation in this case was a cooperative effort of the City of Alton Police Department, the Illinois State Police, the Metropolitan Enforcement Group of Southwestern Illinois and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, pursuant to these agencies' participation in the Project Safe Neighborhoods Initiative. Project Safe Neighborhoods is a joint and cooperative effort of the United States Attorney's Office, the Madison County State's Attorney's Office, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, and other federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies, and is directed at removing guns and drugs from our communities. The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Thomas M. Daly.